DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 050 090 TE 002 362

AUTHOR Morris, Clyde
TITLE Communication and Conflict Resolution: A Prototype Course for Undergraduates.
PUB DATE Dec 70
NOTE 27p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (56th, New Orleans, December 1970)

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Changing Attitudes, *College Instruction, *Communication (Thought Transfer), *Conflict Resolution, Dogmatism, Group Discussion, Group Dynamics, *Role Playing, *Self Concept, Speech

ABSTRACT

To provide students with experience in conflict resolution, 44 undergraduates were trained in theories and practical methods of resolving conflicts and of communicating in their relationships with family, friends of the opposite sex, roommates, and peer groups. During five sessions of 3 hours each, the experimental sections explored by means of contrived situations (1) the importance of not putting one's ego "on the line," (2) destructive and constructive conflicts, (3) the problem of prejudice when seen as part of one's own psychological makeup, (4) consequences of revealing one's self to others in group discussion, and (5) the importance of labeling experiences to put them in proper context. Course evaluations were obtained from students through a 26-item evaluation form which identified the course's strengths and weaknesses, and from a pretest and post-test questionnaire which measured changes in their dogmatism, trust, and attitudes toward communication and conflict. An analysis of these tests indicated that, although no changes occurred in the students' dogmatism scores, the group changed positively in their attitudes toward conflict, in their self awareness and insight, and in their trust of each other. Appendices include a bibliography of suggested readings on conflict resolution, materials for role playing, and evaluation forms. (JM)

ED050090

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

Communication and Conflict Resolution: A Prototype Course for Undergraduates

By

Dr. Clyde Morris
Assistant Professor of Communication
Department of Communication
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan 48823

TE 002 31.2

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Clyde Morris

TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER."

Paper delivered on December 29, 1970 to the Speech Communication Association at the 1970 convention held in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Abstract

During the spring of 1970, 44 undergraduates were given training in theories and practical methods of resolving conflicts. This paper describes the content of the course, presents the students' evaluation of the course and describes areas of applicability for such a course. Involvement devices were used to illustrate the communication concepts being taught. Copies of these devices are included as appendices to this paper.

The course was, in many ways, an experiment. Emphasis was placed on getting the students emotionally involved. We wanted them to feel that their ego was being attacked, that their self esteem was on the line, that they, as persons, were being disconfirmed. Each experience or set of experiences was followed by a discussion of what we had done to them. These discussions were then tied to various communication theories so that students who wished to read more about these theories could do so.

On the student evaluation of the course, students rated the course as useful and relevant. They also asked for more sessions, more small group work and a more clear statement of the goals of the course at the outset of the course. Complete student evaluation of the various learning devices is presented at the end of the paper.

Foreword

Much of the work in developing and presenting materials used in this prototype course was done by Pauline Bailey, Minna Schneir, Fran Shiovitz and Jacqueline White. These four women were undergraduates at the time the course was designed and presented. Because of the topics covered in the sessions (interpersonal conflicts of college students), this teaching of undergraduates by other undergraduates may have been one of the most important elements of the good reception the sessions had. At any rate, I want to thank each of these women for their help in designing this prototype course.

Background of the Problem.

One key assumption in a basic speech course is that by actually giving a speech in front of the class (and the instructor), the student learns more about giving a speech than if he simply read a book about giving a speech. This assumption of "learning by doing" is basic to those of us who presented a pilot course in communication and conflict resolution to 44 undergrates at Michigan State University during the spring of 1970. We wanted to design a course which will be of some practical worth to college students when they deal with conflict.

We determined the most frequent conflicts encountered by students on our campus by asking a sample of 100 students to list their three most common conflicts. In addition, we asked a sample of 20 Resident Advisors to list the most common kinds of conflicts students had when they came to talk to the Resident Advisor. The most common student conflicts centered around the relationships they had with their family, with their roommates, with their peer groups and with their boyfriend or girlfriend. Samples of comments we received were: "My mother and I can't talk fifteen minutes without getting into a fight," or "I can't stand being in my room when my roommate is there," or "Joe and I are good friends but lately it's a hassle over everything we talk about." Another common conflict listed was centered around career plans but we chose not to deal with this problem specifically in the pilot course.

We researched the literature[1] dealing with conflict resolution to determine what, if any, concepts could be used to help students deal with conflicts they had. Then we translated these concepts into classroom experiences which we hoped would be a kind of synthetic reality. From the simulated situation, we hoped students could deal with actual situations. One important suggestion was provided to us by Gerald Miller[2], who has done considerable research in the area of persuasion and attitude change. He pointed out that an attack on a person's self esteem was the single best way to arouse an emotional response. This arousal of an emotional response is an integral part of most conflicts named by the college students.

The students attended 5 sessions (3 hours each) during which they were put through an experience which, hopefully, would involve them emotionally. Once they had the experience, we provided labels for the experience. We felt this inductive approach (experience followed by a discussion of the experience) would help students internalize the lesson. By internalize, we mean become a part of the students' life style. These sessions are described later in this paper.

The objectives of the course were evaluated in several ways. From the students themselves we obtained before and after measures on instruments which assessed such things as "relevance of the course" and "usefulness of the course." We also measured to see if there was any increase in "trust" in their interpersonal relationships. Two graduate students[3] attempted an interaction analysis of the sessions to assess the degree of involvement with the sessions. A speech teacher from Lansing Community College also attended the sessions and provided her assessment of them. Another measure was how much followup interest the 44 students showed in learning more about the topic.

For example, 10 of the 44 asked me for a session in sensitivity training to pursue some of the concepts outlined in the pilot course. The sensitivity

group was held about ten days after the last of the original five sessions was given. Other students borrowed books (such as Coser's, Rapoport's, Watzlawick's and others listed in suggested readings at the end of this paper) on the topics which were covered in the sessions. These criterion measures are, admittedly, only partial measurements of internalization of learned experiences. In some ways, the measures continue because this fall, some of the original 44 reported to me conflicts they dealt with over the summer by using techniques learned in the course. These reports would fall into the category of "some of that stuff you told us really works." Others fall into the category "I tried what you told us but my father and I still can't be in the same room for 15 minutes without fighting." So, we are very definitely presenting a first approximation of a course in communication and conflict resolution aimed at college students.[4]

This paper presents a log of the activities of the 5 sessions, a summary of the evaluation of the activities by the students and by the observers (two graduate students and a speech teacher), copies of the devices used in the sessions and a brief discussion of methods instructors can use when presenting such a course.

Log of activities of the five sessions.

After the first session, we split the group of 44 into two groups. These two groups did similar things but because of the kind of involvement devices, the experiences were not identical. We present the logs of both groups because some devices worked better in one group and some worked better in the other group. We hope these logs provide the reader with a feel for how the sessions were conducted.

Session One

Key Lesson: Don't Put your Ego on the Line.

We used two involvement devices for the first session. One was an "unfair" change in the ground rules of the sessions and the second was use of a confederate to start an argument at the beginning of the first session. The students had been told when they signed up for the class that there would be no paper required. But, at the beginning of the first session, we announced that the Department rules required a paper and we passed out an outline of what the paper would involve. It was to be a 20-page paper, quite explicit in its requirements and it was to be turned in at the end of the last session, which was only two weeks away. Appendix A is the form handed out at the time of the announcement.

The first confederate jumped to his feet after a few minutes and bitterly attacked the course instructors, the department and the university as a whole. He was intentionally rude in his remarks to the point of personally attacking the young lady who had made the announcement. Several of the 44 admitted they were angry about the rule change but even more angry at the confederate for his personal attack of the instructor. The "argument" was permitted to rage for about ten minutes. Then, the confederate and another confederate got up and stomped out of the room. At this point, we asked for a show of hands so we could count how many were upset at the ruling of the required paper and at what had transpired during the previous ten minutes. Thirty of the 44 raised their hands. Then we explained that both the paper and the confederates had been used to get the class emotionally involved and "put their ego on the line." We then had the class

analyze the events to determine why the change of rules and personal attack of the confederate caused the emotional reaction it did. We stressed the point that many conflicts can involve the ego or self esteem of some or all of the parties to the conflict.

Lesson - Many kinds of Conflict.

Following the generalizations from the opening experience, we guided the class in a discussion of "what is conflict" and "how can we deal with conflict?" Needless to say, the group could not arrive at any inclusive definition of conflict and how to deal with it. Their definitions cut across those proposed by Coser, Rapoport, Boulding, Dafrendorf, etc. From this inability to arrive at one all-inclusive framework from which to analyze conflict, we suggested that perhaps several frameworks should be available and, depending on the circumstances, one might use one or another of the frameworks to help analyze and manage the particular conflict.

We emphasized interaction and relationships and how a relationship operates. Examples of relationships were: boy and girl, parent and child, me and my referent group, me and my several referent groups. We suggested the child/parent conflict might stem from the child attempting to redefine the relationship from complementary to symmetrical while the parent still attempts to define the relationship as complementary. We cited the double bind which, very often, parents put their college age children in.

Appendix B outlines the concepts which were covered during the first session of the course.

Session Two

Lesson - What I think of "us".

This session opened by two actors doing a scene from WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF.[5] The words from the scene are given in Appendix C.* Following the presentation of the scene, the class as a whole participated in a discussion of the Martha/George relationship and of relationships in general. The instructors tied the scene back to some of the points we made about relationships in the first session.

The class was then split into groups and given eight hypothetical situations to role play. They were given about 20 minutes to work out their skits and then each one was presented to the rest of the group. Following the presentation of each skit, the class discussed who might be "right" and who might be "wrong" in each incident. By examining these conflicts, we discussed what might be destructive conflict and what might be constructive conflict. One key point we made concerned punctuation of events. Assessments such as "right" and "wrong" depend on what point in time one chooses to begin the series of events. (For example, does the mother "nag" her son because he never talks to her or does he remain quite because she is always "bugging" him about something?)

Appendix D presents the eight conflict situations which were role played by the class.

*
Appendix C--Act I, Scene 1--
has been deleted due to
copyright restrictions.

Session Three

Lesson - What I think of "them."

We opened this session by presenting a film called WHERE IS PREJUDICE? This film shows 12 college students who lived together for a week discussing the problems of prejudice. These college students were a variety of races and religions from several well known colleges. The film shows the stages this group went through as they examine prejudice first as an intellectual question, then as an attribute of others, and finally as a part of their own psychological makeup.

The movie's effect can be felt only by viewing the film. It tends to elicit a "gut level" response from an audience of college students because, we feel, that college students like to think that it is the older generation which is prejudiced and not themselves.

Following the film, we discussed it in two groups of 22 per group. In one of the groups, we allowed the discussion to continue for 10 to 15 minutes; then, we said that 22 was too many for a discussion of this type so five people had to leave to join five from the other group to form a third discussion group. We said there could be no volunteers and there was to be no random lottery to determine the five. The group had to determine criteria for ejecting five from the group of 22. The first suggestion made was that the "quiet ones" weren't helping the discussion anyway so why not pick five quiet members of the group and send them to the other group. One "quiet" member countered this suggestion by suggesting that five of those who "talk too much" should be ejected. One male suggested that five women be chosen to go and this was countered by suggesting five guys should be ejected. We then ran an exercise in which people simply selected five people to go. When asked why, the reasons varied but several admitted that they just didn't care for those people they chose and would just as soon see they leave the group. Those judging the discussion felt that, once again, we had achieved involvement.

We moved to a discussion of the consequences of stereotyping and how readily we all tend to stereotype otners. We had the total group reconvene with men on one side of the room and women on the other. We encouraged them to yell names at one another. This exercise often starts slowly but becomes lively in a few minutes. A girl might yell "guys are insensitive slobs." Another girl might yell "guys are bull headed." Guys yell slogans such as "girls are catty," or "girls are light headed." The name calling proceeds for five minutes or so. We followed this with a discussion of why we hold to these stereotypes and how difficult it is to look past the image. A point made was that of the self fulfilling prophecy; which is that we tend to find evidence to support what we already believe to be true. We intentionally ended the formal session when the discussion was still lively to allow smaller groups to pursue the topic "after the class."

Session Four

Lesson - What "they" think of me.

We began by handing out a sheet which had three situations on it (Appendix E). We divided the class into groups of five or six asking them to discuss the alternatives in the situation. Some groups spent time deciding which of the three

would be discussed, others picked one and discussed it, others discussed all three. We didn't care which. All we wanted was for the members of each group to form impressions of one another.

Then we announced that what we wanted them to do was for each member of each small group to tell each other member of the group: what he liked best about the person, what he liked least about the person, and what he suggested for improvement. This exercise is to be done by looking at each person while talking to him and the person being discussed is expected to listen only and not "defend" himself. The class reacted to this very favorably after they finished but there was much anxiety before the exercise started. We had asked for a show of hands to count who was anxious about the exercise. The most common objection was that "we don't know each other well enough to judge." We pointed out that in many communication situations, a brief impression is all we have to operate with and most of us do just that.

The discussion following the exercise made points from chapter six of the ADJUSTED AMERICAN[6] on indirect self acceptance. This chapter provides, we think, a useful way for college students to look at themselves in relationship to their peer groups. One reason the exercise was difficult, we suggested, was that the played back image doesn't always conform to our self image and this makes us uncomfortable. Many students in the class reported that they had tried the exercise later with friends, roommates, etc.

Session Five

Lesson - What "we" Learned (Labels for the experiences).

One common complaint students make of classes is that they "didn't learn anything." This may or may not be true but we feel one cause of this comment is that when judging an inductive class they don't have words to describe what they learned or they haven't been able to put the experiences into any framework which makes sense to them. Thus, we suggest that the final session be devoted to putting labels on the experiences and putting the experiences into context. As many speech teachers would say "tell them what you told them." So, our last session was a 20 minute presentation which highlighted the events of the other four sessions with an emphasis on the key lessons which we hoped they had learned. The presentation was short because we wanted questions and answers to follow. This was in keeping with our goals of involvement rather than lectures in a course of this type.

One key point we stressed until it became an "in group" catchword was remembering rules 1 and 2. Rule 1 is "never put your ego on the line" and rule 2 is "don't forget rule 1." We also stressed that interpersonal conflicts are more than likely relationship questions rather than content questions. The content of the conflict is often a smokescreen used by the parties to the conflict as a means of avoiding a discussion of the relationship between the parties.

The key points presented included some common first aid techniques for resolving a conflict. They key points of the talk are presented in Appendix F.

Evaluation of the Sessions

As mentioned earlier, evaluation of this type of course presents problems because these evaluations are often done immediately after the sessions but we expect changes to endure longer than a few days. Measures over time would help remedy this problem. But we will present what we did measure and what we obtained from the measures.

Generally, we did several evaluation tasks:

(1) designed and administered a student evaluation form which allowed the students both to evaluate the course along several dimensions and provide suggestions for change;

(2) conducted a study which was designed to measure, by means of a pretest and posttest questionnaire, the students' change in
   a. dogmatism
   b. trust in others
   c. attitudes toward communication and conflict;

(3) conducted a study which was designed to measure (by means of classroom observation, coding, and recording) the relative degree of involvement of the students in the ongoing classroom activities.

Task I. Student Evaluation

The results of this evaluation are shown in Appendices G, H and I. Appendix J is a list of the evaluation form items by median degree of involvement.

Of the three tasks, this first one is probably most useful in any redesigns or extensions of the course. The students' comments suggest they liked the course because it had new ideas, it was relevant to their lives, it was involving and it increased their personal insight and self awareness. They disliked it when the instructors became side tracked or stifled discussion, when we inhibited interaction or participation, because the five sessions were not enough and because the groups were sometimes too large. Complete summary of the evaluations is in the appendices.

Task II. Student Change

Our questionnaire was intended to measure each student's:
degree of dogmatism, trust in others and attitude toward aspects of communication and conflict. The questions we used to operationalize these concepts are shown in appendix K. A control group of students in Communication 100 answered the same set of questions in a similar before and after setting with, of course, no training in between the before and after measures.

Our measure of change in dogmatism failed. We used a seven item dogmatism scale selected from a longer form. The selection criterion being the biserial correlations of the item with the total scale score. We used the highest ones. Estimates of the split half reliability of this scale using the Spearman Brown Correction run from 0.27 to 0.37 for the four testings. These are sufficiently low to render the resultant measurements nearly useless for our purposes. Our scales are probably too short. We used a seven item scale so our students wouldn't know we were measuring dogmatism. One problem on our campus is that we often encounter students who are quite familiar with Rokeach's test for dogmatism. We attempted to "hide" the seven items taken from the scale in with other questions.

In the area of attitudes toward aspects of communication and conflict, we found that item 13, "Conflict should be avoided," turned out as we hypothesized. The experimental group tended to change toward disagreement, the control group tended toward agreement. On the other hand, item 15, "My conflicts are more severe than most university students'," went in the opposite direction to the one hypothesized. The experimental group changed toward agreement while the

control group changed toward disagreement. We are reporting here only findings we feel are interesting or significant and trying to avoid presenting all findings regardless of reliability and validity, as is at times the tradition in social science.

The trust scale fared a little better. There was a significant difference between the two groups. The experimental group had an average change score for trust of +0.94 (positive change means more trust). The control group had an average change score of -0.67. The t value for the difference is 2.15. The probability of a t this large or larger is about 0.04 (2 alternative, df=62). While we are not too excited about this one finding, we do feel that a change in trust will, somehow, be important to those who intend to train people in conflict resolution.

The degree of involvement measures are also not much more useful than the subjective assessment of the speech teacher. As is the case with many interaction analysis schemes, interjudge reliability is hard to come by. We feel that video tapes of the sessions might be necessary for proper evaluation. It is difficult to reconstruct a conversation later from interaction analysis data.

Operationally, we coded four categories:

(1) number of persons other than instructors who participated verbally in the class activity.
(2) number of first person statements made by students
(3) number of verbal interruptions made by students
(4) number of verbal differentiators (e.g. laughter) made by students

Each of these is per equal unit of time. We used 15 minutes. Those experiences with the highest involvement were: the introduction to the first session (plant and change of ground rules), male and female stereotyping experience, the "what I like best, what I like least about you" experience, and the role playing. Those with the lowest involvement were the lectures.

In summarizing our evaluations, we feel the student evaluation is most useful and the student involvement is next most useful. The changes in dogmatism, trust and attitudes toward conflict and communication are least useful. We have presented in the appendices only those data which we feel our readers will find useful.

Summary and Conclusions

We have attempted to distill what we know from the field of communication and develop a practical course intended to help college students deal with interpersonal conflicts. Many of their conflicts, we feel, are with important others in their lives; people such as parents, friends, intimate friends, and intimate friends of the opposite sex. Most of these conflicts, we suggest, can be more readily dealt with by an awareness of the relationships involved rather than by examining the content of the conflict. Furthermore, we suggest that either one or the other or both self images (ego) are on the line in these interpersonal conflicts. We suggest that people in college can be trained to deal with these conflicts by having experiences which simulate the conflicts and then communicating about the experiences. We are suggesting a course which

is inductive: have the experience; then, put a label on the experience. We have presented a written narrative describing how 44 students were subjected to a set of these experiences and how we evaluated the exposure to these experiences. We consider our prototype course a beginning and not an end. We will consider this paper a success if we hear feedback from this assembly of people, who are interested in Speech Communication, telling us what they liked most about what we did, what they liked least about what we did, and what they would suggest for improvement.

Footnotes

1. The results of the literature search have been compiled into a rather extensive annotated bibliography: Communication and Conflict Resolution, Morris, C.D.J., et al, Department of Communication, Michigan State University, May 1969.

2. Professor of Communication, Michigan State University. Dr. Miller has written numerous articles describing his own research and synthesizing work done in the area of persuasion and attitude change.

3. Larry Kincaid and Rich Parker, Department of Communication, Michigan State University. They were guided by Dr. Dan Wackman, Department of Communication, Michigan State University.

4. Also last spring, we designed a course for high school students with case studies suitable for a high school audience. This course is described in A Proposal for a High School Course in Conflict Resolution, Morris, C.D.J., April 1970.

5. Both the Virginia Woolf scene and the concepts of complementary and symmetrical relationships are in Pragmatics of Human Communication, Watzlawick, P., Beavin, J., and Jackson, D., New York: Norton, 1967.

6. The Adjusted American: Normal Neuroses in the Individual and Society, Putney, S., and Putney, G., New York: Harper and Row, 1964.

Suggested Readings

Boulding, K.E., Conflict and Defense, New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964.

Coser, L., The Functions of Social Conflict, New York: Free Press, 1956.

Dahrendorf, R., "Toward a Theory of Social Conflict." Journal of Conflict Resolution, No. 2, 1958, 265-279.

Deutsch, M.A., "Trust and Suspicion." Journal of Conflict Resolution, 2, 1958, 265-279.

Kellman, H.C., "Compliance, Identification and Internalization: Three Processes in Attitude Change." Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. II, No. 1, 51-60.

Morris, C.D.J., et al, Communication and Conflict Resolution, Department of Communication, Michigan State University, May 1969.

Putney, S., and Putney, G., The Adjusted American: Normal Neuroses in the Individual and Society, New York: Harper and Row, 1964.

Rapoport, A., Fights, Games and Debates, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960.

Watzlawick, P., Beavin, J., and Jackson, D., Pragmatics of Human Communication, New York: Norton and Co., 1967.

Appendix A

Because Conflict Resolution is in session only two weeks of the term, this paper must be completed and turned in to the Student Affairs office, 5th floor Kedzie Hall by 8:00 April 15.
The paper will be graded on these criteria: insight, knowledge of material, writing ability and organization.
Criteria for the writing of the paper are:

1. it may be 15-20 pages long
2. double-spaced, typed
3. all 4 parts listed below must be included
4. a bibliography of 3 books is sufficient (also, if you wish, all footnotes may be placed on a separate sheet of paper at the end).

Consider in your paper:

1. What conflicts within yourself have resulted from value clashes -- for example, your values vs. your parents, your values vs. your religion, your values as they change within you.

2. What values has the practice of Christianity affected in the world as a whole? What values in the practice of Christianity are not evident in the world? Before Christianity, how were values chosen?

3. Do you think that mankind would have a similar structure to that of today without the introduction of Christianity? Support your answer.

4. Define the term conflict resolution as it applies:
   a. only as a term (definition agreed on in class)
   b. as it applies to intrapersonal development
   c. as it applies to interpersonal development
   d. as it applies to politics and world affairs
   e. as a discipline

Appendix B

Conflict Resolution
Monday, April 6

Ego Involvement

When an issue ceases being an issue and becomes a personal affront, or a matter seemingly relating directly to the individual and what others' perceptions of him are, or when the issue becomes emotional and personal rather than factual and impersonal, ego involvement begins.

The resulting situation is that often the conflict becomes impossible to solve because interest has changed from solving the problem at hand to attacking or protecting the individual. Examples of conflicts that often involve ego involvement are conflicts of: boyfriend-girlfriend, parent-son, among peers and within the individual (as in a conflict arising from a changing of morals).

Ego involvement is evident in heated debates, name calling, shouting, signs of disgust and an unwillingness to cooperate, especially concerning the other's point of view.

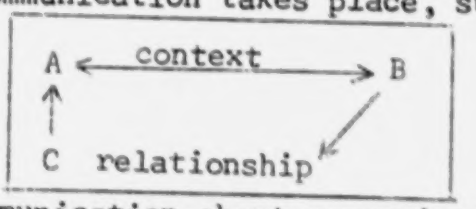
The point is that ego involvement is a detrement to conflict resolution and only increases the fighting issues rather than working to resolve conflict. Therefore, Rule Number One is: Never Put Your Ego On The Line!

Not putting your ego on the line encourages you to face matters rationally and factually. The problem is faced objectively, and the individual does not confuse the issue at hand as being a reflection on himself; that is, he does not allow negative feedback to his stand become a personal affront.

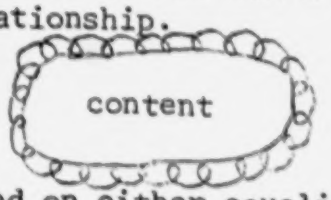
Relationships and Control

Context -- the effect person A has on person B; they are both in turn influenced by the context in which their interaction takes place.

Relationship -- expressed verbally or nonverbally: 1. verbally -- as a report or command; 2. non-verbally -- expressed by shouting or smiling, or in context where the communication takes place, such as in a circus ring.



Metacommunication -- communication about communication; the use of conceptualizations that are not part of communication but are about communication. Every communication has a content and a relationship aspect in which the context classifies the relationship.



All relationships are based on either equality (symmetrical relationships) or difference (complementary relationships).

Symmetrical -- the relationship is based on equality and a minimization of difference.

Complementary -- the relationship is based on two different positions. One partner occupies the superior "one-up" position, and the other partner occupies the inferior "one-down" position. These may be set by a social or cultural context (for example, mother-infant). One partner does not force the relationship on the other, but they both assume positions unconsciously.

Pseudosymmetrical -- person A allows or forces person B to be equal to him.

Metacomplementary -- person A allows or forces person B to be in charge of him.

The Double Bind and Trust

A double bind is one pattern of communication interaction. Through this interaction, the people involved (two or more), implicitly try to determine a "mutual definition of their relationship." The four factors involved in a double bind are: 1. the relationship is a vital one for these people and they are concerned in maintaining it; 2. one order follows another order and conflicts with the first order; 3. high probability of the bind situation happening over and over again; 4. the recipient of the message cannot escape the situation. An example would be reading a sign that says "Ignore this sign," or a wife who says to her husband, "I want you to dominate me" but it is impossible for him to be in the dominant position because he is following her command.

The situation then is one in which there are two conflicting statements, two messages that do not logically make sense within one frame of reference but still demand some sort of reaction.

Transactional Disqualification has two characteristics. 1. there is no relation between statements as far as content is concerned; 2. there is no indication that the first message was received accurately if at all (ex: "I'm a mother, I should know."). This double bind situation establishes an ambiguous situation where a person learns to expect punishment. Thus, the person learns a rigid pattern of responses.

Defining Conflict

How you conceptualize something limits the solutions you would accept. Below are class suggestions as to what conflict is or what is involved in it. Remember that not necessarily all are correct or incorrect, and one person's definition of conflict might be different from another's.

(Suggested ways of defining conflict.)

-- difference in viewpoints

-- two parties don't understand what each other is talking about

-- must include emotion

-- must not include emotion

-- irrational

-- conflicts within the self: you believe in one thing, but want to do another

-- conflict within the self: when you respect a person's viewpoint and they disagree with you

-- those situations at which you can become ego-involved

-- discontinuity is necessary

-- must be aware of it

-- need not be aware of it

-- any situation in which you involve yourself as a person in presenting your issue

Appendix D

Eight situations role played. Only the actors were given the situation. The others observe the scene as portrayed by the actors.

1. Scene involves 4 persons who share an apartment. Two of the 4 are untidy in their habits and the other two are neat. The two neat students confront the other two with their gripes.

2. An unhappily married college couple approach the parents of the girl to tell them that they plan on getting a divorce. The parents listen but insist that the problems are only a passing thing. The couple feels the parents don't understand.

3. A college girl gets pregnant. Her boyfriend wants to have an abortion because they can't afford to stay in school with a baby. The girl wants to have the baby.

4. A college guy with long hair is home on vacation. His father takes the position that the son must get a haircut or no longer be supported while going to college.

5. Four roommates are going to a party. Several hours before the party, 2 of the roommates find out that the other 2 knew that pot is to be smoked at the party. The 2 who didn't know are freshman and they are upset and unsure of what to do. The 4 discuss the situation.

6. Roommates of girl who never goes out are trying to get her to go on a blind date. Girl has many reasons for not going. They discuss the situation.

7. Two roommates. One always has company. Other feels her privacy is being violated. The issue has smoldered for some time. They are good friends. They discuss the issue.

8. One roommate is tired of covering for the other one when the other's mother calls and the first has been out all night or all weekend. They discuss.

Appendix E

Choose one of these situations to discuss.

1. During the delivery of her second child, a twenty-five year old woman has a heart attack. She went into a coma from the resultant lack of oxygen. She has been in the hospital now for almost four years, without waking up. Her husband has been visiting her steadily about two or three times a week. The physician suggests that the Barum Pump, a machine which pumps thick, souplike food products into a patient's stomach through the nose, be turned off.

2. A couple with two children decide that their family is complete. They discover that their birth control method has failed and the woman is expecting. The husband suggests an abortion or giving up the child for adoption; the wife wants to keep the child.

3. The Civil Defense alarm goes off, heralding a nuclear disaster. As you prepared to leave for a bomb shelter equipped with the necessities of life, you must decide which three personal possessions you will bring.

Appendix F

Summary of talk on conflict resolution
Presented by Dr. Clyde Morris
April 15, 1970

Remember rule 1 (never put your ego on the line) and rule two (don't forget rule one).

Remember the other person's ego is also likely to be on the line. Conflict is resolved when both egos are out of danger of being bruised.

Ways to put another person's ego on the line:

1. attack his self esteem

2. attack his need for acceptance (family vs peer group)

3. attack his need to belong (conflict and alienation)

4. attack his need for accomplishment

5. attack his need for security

6. attack his need for creativity

one person can threaten a group

Common conflict of college students is redefining relationship with parents from complementary to symmetrical

"First aid" for personal conflict resolution

1. Ask if you or the other person is in a generalized state of anxiety.

2. Rapoport technique
   a. state one another's point of view
   b. state region of validity for other's point of view
   c. state values shared with other

3. Ask yourself if an issue is at stake or a relationship (metacommunication).

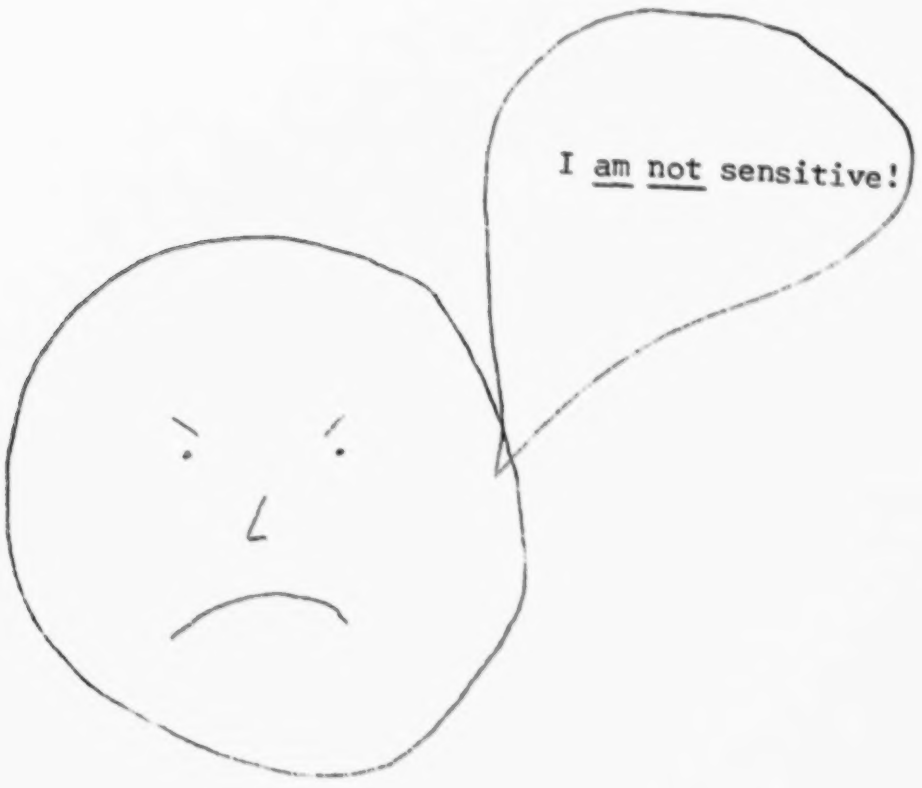
Appendix F

4. Try exchange on relationship level (like most, like least, suggest change)

5. Dialogue technique but allow time to discuss problem
   a. what are the facts at stake
   b. what are the values at stake
   c. are the values instrumental or consummatory (means vs ends)

Remember that dialogue can bring us together as well as drive us apart. We choose what is made salient in any given conversation. If the conversation focuses on differences, then the differences appear to be greater than they are.

Remember rules one and two



Appendix G

MEDIAN RESPONSES

STUDENT INSTRUCTIONAL RATING FORM A

For each statement below,

mark:	1	2	3	4	5
if you:	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON'T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE

Median Response		
2.13	1.	You have become more competent in conflict resolution as a result of this course.
1.17	2.	The instructors left you with the impression that the course material is worthwhile.
1.63	3.	The instructors instilled in you an interest and enthusiasm about the material.
2.57	4.	Your opinions about some of the topics which were covered changed because of taking this course.
3.55	5.	This course has stimulated you to do outside reading on your own.
1.50	6.	The time spent in this course was worthwhile.
2.68	7.	This course has changed my behavior.
4.79	8.	This course has <u>not</u> been useful to me.
2.83	9.	You learned more in this course than you expected to learn.
4.18	10.	You were disappointed in this course.
1.55	11.	You generally understood the material presented in this course.
2.64	12.	You learned more in this course than in similar courses.
1.95	13.	You really had to think about some of the ideas discussed.
4.24	14.	You did <u>not</u> learn much in this course.
2.25	15.	The instructors covered an adequate amount of material in this course.
2.04	16.	The class presentations were well organized.
2.23	17.	The instructor should have given additional sources where supplementary information might be found.
1.90	18.	The content of this course was appropriate to the aims and objectives of this course.
2.02	19.	This course aided you in understanding or solving some of your personal problems.
2.05	20.	This course was helpful in developing new skills.
1.23	21.	The instructor showed how the course is related to the practical world.
1.31	22.	The content of this course impressed you as important and relevant to you.
2.15	23.	This course had a big impact on me.
4.54	24.	This course was <u>not</u> a valuable educational experience.
1.46	25.	You were involved in the classes.
1.75	26.	This course has been useful to you.

Use the back of the <u>answer sheet</u> (not this) to answer these questions:

27. Discuss what you consider to be the three best points and three worst points of this course.
28. What are your suggestions for improving this course?

N = 44 for every item.

Appendix H

STUDENT INSTRUCTIONAL RATING REPORT

Communication 499

Spring, 1970

Item	Median	Frequency of Student Agreement				
		1 # Strongly Agree 2 # Agree 3 # Don't Know 4 # Disagree 5 # Strongly Disagree				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	2.13	7	24	13		
2	1.17	33	10	1		
3	1.63	19	23	1		
4	2.57	5	16	14	1	
5	3.55	1	13	7	7	2
6	1.50	22	19	1	20	3
7	2.68	3	15	22	2	
8	4.79			2	4	
9	2.83	8	11	9	11	31
10	4.18	1	6	2	14	2
11	1.55	21	21	2	19	16
12	2.64	5	14	21	3	1
13	1.95	10	27	4	3	
14	4.24	1	2	2	23	16
15	2.25	4	24	4	11	1
16	2.04	7	28	6	3	
17	2.23	6	22	8	8	
18	1.90	10	30	3	1	
19	2.02	9	25	10		
20	2.05	7	27	10		
21	1.23	30	13	1		
22	1.31	27	17			
23	2.15	11	17	8	8	
24	4.54			1	20	23
25	1.46	23	20		1	
26	1.75	15	28	1		

N = 44 For every item.

Appendix I

RESPONSES TO ITEMS 27 AND 28*

27. Best Points of the Course

19	the material, new ideas
17	relevance, application to everyday life
15	high involvement or interest, stimulating, personal involvement
10	group interaction, group discussion, small groups
10	increased personal insight or awareness
8	role playing
8	Monday the 13th: liked most-least session
7	no pressure, loose course structure
5	the way the instructors handled the course
4	peers teaching, instructors on same level
2	movie
2	new friends, the people
3	miscellaneous

27. Worst Points of the Course

15	instructors' methods (stiffling discussion, getting side-tracked)
11	not enough: interaction, class participation, personal contact
10	too short, not long enough
10	class too large, groups too large
7	lack of clear course direction, lack of organization
5	lectures, instructors not well informed (material)
5	not enough material, not thorough enough
5	first meeting: too slow, too general, a waste
3	lack of opportunity to apply new knowledge (e.g., resolution process)
3	need a greater variety of people, too many friends
2	the room
2	Saturday's "minus 5" session
13	miscellaneous

28. Suggestions for Improving the Course

11	more time in small groups, break down into smaller groups
10	lengthen the course, more sessions
7	train instructors better
7	attain a higher degree of personal involvement
6	role-play more
5	provide a list of supplemental readings
5	have more discussion, more interaction
5	conduct a smaller class
4	structure lectures more, go deeper into material, more ideas
4	better meeting place, less formal setting
3	attempt personal conflict resolution
2	organize course better, hand out course outline
2	have Clyde speak more
2	make course available to more people, to the world
1	group individuals according to background in communication
1	keep instructors on same level as students
1	improve visual aids
1	more time together continuously
1	alternate instructors

*The numbers represent frequency of response in each category; N = 44.

Appendix J

SIR (FORM A) ITEMS
ORDERED BY MEDIAN DEGREE OF INVOLVEMENT

1 = Strongly Agree

Median Response	Item	
1.17	2.	The instructors left you with the impression that the course material is worthwhile.
1.23	21.	The instructor showed how the course is related to the practical world.
1.31	22.	The content of this course impressed you as important and relevant to you.
1.46	25.	You were involved in the classes.
1.50	6.	Time spent in this course was worthwhile.
1.55	11.	You generally understood the material presented in this course.
1.63	3.	The instructors instilled in you an interest and enthusiasm about the material.
1.75	26.	This course has been useful to you.
1.90	18.	The content of this course was appropriate to the aims and objectives of this course.
1.95	13.	You really had to think about some of the ideas discussed.
2.02	19.	This course aided you in understanding or solving some of your personal problems.
2.04	16.	The class presentations were well organized.
2.05	20.	This course was helpful in developing new skills.
2.13	1.	You have become more competent in conflict resolution as a result of this course.
2.15	23.	This course had a big impact on me.
2.23	17.	The instructor should have given additional sources where supplementary information might be found.
2.25	15.	The instructors covered an adequate amount of material in this course.
2.57	4.	Your opinions about some of the topics which were covered changed because of taking this course.
2.64	12.	You learned more in this course than in similar courses.
2.68	7.	This course has changed my behavior.
2.83	9.	You learned more in this course than you expected to learn.
3.55	5.	This course has stimulated you to do outside reading on your own.
4.18	10.	You were disappointed in this course.
4.24	14.	You did <u>not</u> learn much in this course.
4.54	24.	This course was <u>not</u> a valuable educational experience.
4.79	8.	This course has <u>not</u> been useful to me.

5 = Strongly Disagree

Appendix K

Listed below are a number of statements. Each represents a commonly held opinion and there are no right or wrong answers. You will probably disagree with some items and agree with others. We are interested in the extent to which you agree or disagree with such matters of opinion.

Read each statement carefully. Then indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree by marking the appropriate number on the answer sheet. The numbers and their meaning are indicated below:

If you:	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON'T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
mark:	1	2	3	4	5

First impressions are usually best in such matters. If you find that the numbers to be used in answering do not adequately indicate your own opinion, use the one which is closest to the way you feel.

1. Once I get wound up in a heated discussion I just can't stop.
2. In the long run the best way to live is to pick friends and associates whose tastes and beliefs are the same as one's own.
3. If people communicated more there would be a lot less conflict.
4. Most people are not really honest for a desirable reason; they're afraid of getting caught.
5. If you act in good faith with people almost all of them will reciprocate with fairness towards you.
6. In this complicated world of ours the only way we can know what's going on is to rely on leaders or experts who can be trusted.
7. Sometimes more communication only makes conflict worse.
8. Most people just don't know what's good for them.
9. People usually tell the truth, even when they know they would be better off lying.
10. People claim they have ethical standards regarding honesty and morality, but few people stick to them when the chips are down.
11. There are two kinds of people in this world: those who are for the truth and those who are against the truth.
12. Of all the different philosophies which exist in this world there is probably only one which is correct.

13. Conflict should be avoided.

14. Conflict is inevitable.

15. My conflicts are more severe than most university students.

16. My blood boils whnever a person stubbornly refuses to admit he's wrong.

17. I have conflicts more often than most university students.

18. Anyone who completely trusts anyone else is asking for trouble.

Please answer the following items by using the corresponding numbers.

19. Age:
    1. 19 and below
    2. 20 or 21
    3. 22 or 23
    4. 24 or 25
    5. 26 and above

20. Class:
    1. Freshman
    2. Sophomore
    3. Junior
    4. Senior

21. G.P.A.:
    1. 2.0 or below
    2. 2.01 to 2.5
    3. 2.51 to 3.0
    4. 3.01 to 3.5
    5. 3.51 to 4.0

22. Sex:
    1. Male
    2. Female

Please use the back of the answer sheet to answer the following questions.

23. Why are you taking this course?

24. How did you find out about this course?

25. In your own words give a short definition of "conflict."